Newsletter No 56, June 2012
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Group - IFOAM EU Group
Welcome note

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Dear members,

The first half of the year is almost done. Some of you might already be thinking about the holidays, for farmers the busiest time of the year is just about to begin, and the IFOAM EU Group is still working hard to achieve the most progress possible before the political circus comes to a halt in August.

One major priority is and was the announced review of the organic regulation by the European Commission. After its report was finally published with a five-month delay, the process has now kicked off. The IFOAM EU Group is well prepared: we established working groups for most priorities and are currently discussing our draft positions to be approved latest in autumn this year. Further, our already agreed positions on flexibility, greenhouse and poultry provide a solid fundament for our input. The appointment of a new regulation coordinator to start on 01st July will further strengthen our impact and capacity in the regulation area.

Politically, the reform of the CAP and the EU’s new research policy are hot potatoes. In both cases, the Commission legal proposals are now being discussed by the Council and the European Parliament. The IFOAM EU Group has built alliances with other NGOs and networks to achieve maximum impact and to influence MEPs.

Regarding GMOs, the Commission proposal to allow national bans got stuck in the Council with the Danish Council Presidency unable to find a compromise. We now have to see whether the discussion will recommence under forthcoming Presidencies.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Marco Schlüter
Director IFOAM EU Group
1. NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1. Organic Regulation

Ongoing evaluation of the EU Organic Regulation

The Commission report to the Council and European Parliament on the application of the organic regulation 834/2007, published 11th May, signalled the kick-off for the review of the EU organic legislation and debate among different stakeholders and EU institutions. In its meeting on 18th June, the European Council held a first brief discussion on the subject. Taking into account the delay of the report, the current Danish Council Presidency will need to hand over the dossier to the upcoming Cypriot Council Presidency (1 July 2012). A discussion at the May-meeting of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming has already taken place. It is expected that the European Parliament will soon also start discussions on the Commission report.

The IFOAM EU Group took note of the Commission report and president Christopher Stopes said: “Since it came into force in 2009, the new Organic Regulation and its implementing rules have been developed and improved, with the introduction of standards for organic aquaculture, for yeast and for wine. The organic sector looks forward to a period of stability with the new regulation. Nevertheless, we recognise the need to continue the process of fine-tuning the regulation to overcome weaknesses and enable the sector to continue to develop”.

Further elements of the review are an evaluation and possible impact assessment of the organic regulation. Consequently, the Commission launched a call for tender and is currently selecting the consortium consisting of experts to conduct this evaluation, which is expected to be finalised by autumn 2013. This will go hand in hand with an Impact Assessment to be prepared by the Commission by the end of 2013, which might include a legal proposal for amending Council regulation 834/2007.

Stakeholders will be involved closely in this process through bilateral meetings with the Commission as well as debates in the Advisory Group on Organic Farming, as was already the case at the last meeting in June 2012. An online stakeholder consultation is expected by the beginning of 2013.

The IFOAM EU Group has started work on different areas such as imports & control as core elements of the debate.

“We acknowledge the need for a detailed analysis of potential challenges and support a focused improvement of the organic regulation where and if necessary. The IFOAM EU Group will actively work with its stakeholders to contribute to this debate and ensure that the voice of the organic movement is heard clearly”, explained Marco Schlüter, director of the Group.

The Press Release of IFOAM EU Group on the Commission report can be found here.

The new organic regulations (EC) no 834/2007, 889/2008 and 1235/2008 replace the old regulation (EEC) No 2092/1992. The organic sector looks forward to a period of stability with the new regulation. Nevertheless, there is a need to continue the process of fine-tuning the regulation to overcome weaknesses and to enable the sector to continue to develop. The IFOAM EU Group acknowledges the need for a detailed
analysis of potential challenges and supports a focused improvement of the organic regulation where and only if necessary. The IFOAM EU Group has already started organising its work internally in order to develop a common point of view that reflects the needs of the organic sector.

The IFOAM EU Group has recently published a dossier on the organic regulation which provides the context and background for the ongoing review and evaluation: “European Organic Regulations (EC) 834/2007, 889/2008 and 1235/2008 - An evaluation of the first three years - Looking for further development.”

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**European Court of Auditors: Competent authorities do not sufficiently supervise control bodies**

In its Special Report (No. 9/2012), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) concluded that a number of competent authorities in the Member States do not sufficiently fulfil their supervisory role over control bodies. As a result, certain control bodies fail to satisfy a number of EU requirements and to implement certain good practices. Also, the competent authorities in Member States encounter difficulties in ensuring the traceability of organic products within their territories and such traceability is even more difficult to achieve for products that have crossed borders. In relation to imported organic products, the system governing the various import schemes was also found to have weaknesses. A summary of the recommendations made to remedy the weaknesses found during ECA’s audit are also available as a summary in ECA’s press release from 26th June. The Commission is said to show broad agreement with the Court’s recommendations and intends to follow them, including specific audits on the control systems for organic production by the Food and Veterinary Office from 2012 onwards.

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**First step for China and EU: mutual recognition of organic regulations**

On 12th June European Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloș and the Chinese Minister for Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) Zhi Shuping agreed to start negotiations on a mutual recognition of each other’s organic regulation systems. The EU, now the main importer of Chinese organic products, expects to also increase exports to China and therefore embraces the possibility of a smoother flow of products between the two markets.

The EU has several pending dossiers on mutual recognition of organic standards with Third Countries, among them South America, Thailand and Taiwan. To assess the dossiers, the European Commission has launched a call for tender on 08th May to find external evaluators.
May-Meeting of Standing Committee on Organic Farming

At its meeting from 21st to 22nd May the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF) discussed the Commission report on the evaluation of the organic regulation. The ministry representatives responsible for organic farming also discussed the Commission proposal on the amendments to the Annexes of Regulation (EC) No 889/2007 on fertilisers, pesticides and feed in-conversion.

Another key agenda point was the adoption of the new list of organic Control Bodies in Third Countries with recognised equivalent control systems. The SCOF voted in favour of the approval of an additional 24 Control Bodies to be included in the import Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008.

Meeting of Advisory Group on Organic Farming

On 12th June organic stakeholders and the European Commission came together in the Advisory Group on Organic Farming (AGOF). The major topic of their meeting was the Commission report on the evaluation of the European organic regulation and possible stakeholder input within this process. Points of discussion were the Annexes on fertiliser, pesticide residues and feed in-conversion of Regulation (EC) No 889/2009 and the European import and control system for the organic market. The discussion also focused on issues such as poultry production, food processing and greenhouse production.

Furthermore, the latest activities of TP Organics were presented by Bram Moeskops, new Scientific Coordinator at the IFOAM EU Group. He was happy to announce that TP Organics got a seat in the Stakeholder Advisory Board of the Joint Programming Initiative “Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change” (FACCE-JPI).

The European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC) announced the launch event on the outcomes of a pesticide residue report would take place on 13th September 2012.

The European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) outlined possible approaches for job creation within the CAP reform, the Commission presented the initiative on developing the scheme “product from my farm” and the EU promotion policy for organic farming was also discussed at the meeting.

The next AGOF meetings are planned for September and December 2012. Key points of discussion in the next meeting will be the above-mentioned Commission report on the evaluation of the organic regulation.
Exceptional organic feed rules published

On 15th June 2012 the new implementing regulation on organic feed Regulation (EU) No 505/2012 was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This regulation specifically defines exceptional rules to keep derogation for 5% non-organic protein feed allowed in organic animal feeding, which gives more time to the market to develop the supply for organic protein crops. It also includes the rule requiring 60% as the minimum share of feed produced in the own holding, a revised list of feed materials, compound feed and feed additives, and clarifies the use of the term ‘organic’ in the labelling of feed produced from organic ingredients.

Also two non-feed issues were modified by this regulation. In Annex VIII the description of rosemary extracts was modified to “Only when derived from organic production”. Additionally, the exceptional rule for using non-organic pullets of 18 weeks was prolonged to 31st December 2014, as pullets hatcheries are not yet able to deliver organic pullets to satisfy the needs of the entire organic sector.

List of control bodies in third countries published

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 508/2012 of 20 June 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 as regards the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union. It sets out the list of control bodies and control authorities authorised to carry out controls and issue certificates in third countries for the purpose of equivalence. This list is a combination of the list of control bodies already published on 06th December and new control bodies approved by the SCOF in May this year. This system is part of the new organic import system and will come into force as of 01st July 2012. The regulation covers national import authorisations for imported products that are not covered by the categories and/or origins listed for that country. It also clarifies and updates some other issues related to the organic importing system.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

EU stakeholder consultations on water and environmental action

The European Commission plans to launch the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) and a communication on water policies (“Water Blueprint”) by the end of this year. It invited stakeholders to contribute opinions and data through two consultations. The IFOAM EU Group took these opportunities to advocate for comprehensive approaches towards sustainability.

On the 7th EAP consultation, IFOAM EU advocated for a new ambitious programme which is able to address the EU’s environmental challenges, such as improving soil management, halting the loss of biodiversity and delivering sustainable resource management. Meanwhile, the Environment Council conclusions on the 7th EAP, adopted on 11 July and welcomed by IFOAM EU, call for concrete actions from European leaders.

On the Water Blueprint, the IFOAM EU Group stated that organic farming can significantly help to improve water quality. Priority should be given to organic farming when implementing the Water Framework Directive. The Common Agricultural Policy also needs to become more ambitious in meeting EU water protection targets.

Leading expert highlights the role of organic farming in pesticide reduction

The benefits of organic farming, in terms of higher water retention in soils and plant production, can contribute significantly to reducing our dependency on pesticides, according to David Pimentel, Professor Emeritus of Entomology and Agriculture at Cornell University. The conference organised by the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA), the Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) and the International Organisation for Biological Control (IOBC) looked at the role Integrated Pest Management as a means to reduce pesticide dependency through the uptake of environmentally-friendly crop protection can play. The conference, which brought together key stakeholders from the Commission, the Parliament, the research community and civil society, also looked at the ongoing challenges of understanding the complexity of ecological and agricultural systems, ensuring long-term perspectives and changing mindsets. Further information can be found here.
COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)

Current State of Play on CAP reform in EU Council and Parliament

Draft COMAGRI reports presented in the Parliament

IFOAM EU has criticised the lack of ambition in the draft reports on the CAP reform coming from the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. While acknowledging some notable improvements to support more sustainable farming practices and systems under rural development, the IFOAM EU Group called on the members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to deliver a CAP reform that can respond to the environmental and socio-economic needs of all farmers and rural communities while at the same time clearly recognising the importance of organic farming as a best practice approach to drive sustainability across the sector. A preliminary review of the reports on direct payments and rural development, presented in the Parliament on 18th and 19th June show a number of changes to the Commission’s proposals. On the greening component, the direct payments draft report calls for the watering down of the specific measures (permanent pasture, crop diversification and ecological focus areas) proposed by the Commission in October, and extending eligibility for greening payments to farmers who participate in agri-environmental schemes in existing rural development programmes. In prioritising ‘agri-environment-climate’ and organic farming measures the rural development draft report goes beyond the Commission’s proposal, by clearly calling for at least 30% of Member State’s programmes to be allocated to such measures. Furthermore, the report calls for increased EU co-financing for agri-environment.

Global Agriculture – new website

Why should almost one billion people on our planet be going hungry while just as many are suffering from the ill effects of obesity? In 2011 more grain was harvested than ever before: 2.3 billion tons worldwide. Despite this record-breaking harvest, only 46% was used to feed people. This new website builds upon the IAASTD report and delivers facts and campaign tools on global food security.

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Farm Ministers discuss prioritisation of future rural development funding

In the backdrop of the Parliament’s discussions, the debate among Agriculture ministers in the Council has become more substantive. Reports from the Agriculture Council Meeting on 18th June show that farm ministers are divided on the Commission’s proposal to ring-fence 25% of their rural development budget for ‘agri-environment-climate’ and organic farming measures in the next programming period. During the Council meeting, Commissioner Dacian Cioloş clearly stated that the Commission’s intention was to rather oblige Member States to ring-fence a quarter of the rural development budget. However, whereas some Member States would like to see the allocation of funding for such measures to be increased and enshrined in the legal text, other Member States were of the opinion that there should be no prioritisation of these measures. Elsewhere, the Danish EU Presidency presented its progress report on the CAP reform discussions within the Council so far. ARC2020 has come out strongly against the direction of discussions in the Council and Parliament, calling on decision-makers to deliver a genuine reform. In addition, the IFOAM EU Group, in cooperation with environmental NGOs, has commented on the recent developments in the Council.
CAP reform event in Luxembourg

The new Luxembourgian organic growers organisation Bio-Lëtzebuerg held the workshop “For an efficient Common Agricultural Policy” on 7th June in Munsbach. The Minister for Agriculture Romain Schneider outlined the current negotiations on the CAP reform and explained that Luxembourg had just secured that farmers entering now into the current agri-environmental programmes will continue receiving support also beyond 2014. The Minister for the Environment Marco Schank in his speech encouraged municipalities to investigate the possibility of investing more in organic food in the framework of green public procurement. IFOAM EU Vice President Alexander Gerber and Policy Manager Antje Kölling approached the CAP theme from different angles, outlining the decision-making process in the context of global challenges and the core demands of the organic sector. A general increase in environmental performance demands by the CAP and a clearer commitment to organic farming would be key to shaping a CAP for the future, and the discussions in the Council on watering down greening requirements must be influenced. Raymond Aenderkerk and Steffi Zimmer presented a recent comparison of organic and conventional farms in Luxembourg, which found e.g. better results for organic farms in terms of biodiversity and that organic farms often receive lower amounts of overall subsidies than comparable conventional ones.
3 farmers, 3 continents, 3 perspectives on the CAP

ARC2020 in cooperation with Misereor and the German NGO Platform «Meine Landwirtschaft» organised a panel discussion in Brussels on 20th June to shed light on the global aspects of the CAP reform. Sieta Keimpema from the European Milk Board described the situation of European dairy farmers as being trapped between high bank loans they took on in order to invest in competitiveness and low milk prices. Hellen Yego, a farmer from Kenya, underlined that sustainable farming is key for her country in order to secure employment and local food supply, but dumping with cheap food products from Europe threatens the viability of local farming. This dumping must end. Joe Borgerding, organic farmer from the USA, warned that Europe should not follow the US model of industrialisation in farming. He converted to organic because of soil problems and explained that mechanical weed treatment would be an answer to roundup-resistant weed and cheaper than pesticide use on the long run. IFOAM EU policy manager Antje Kölling moderated the event and underlined that a shift to a sustainable CAP was important also with regard to the CAP’s global impacts.

Commission publishes study on policies for organic farming

The Commission has published a study on the application of measures and strategies to develop organic farming in rural development programmes under the current programming period 2007-2013 of the CAP. The EU-wide study conducted by researchers from the UK, Switzerland and Germany looks at the role of public policy in supporting the development of organic farmers, including the relationship between specific policy measures and the overall organic farming strategy in six Member States and nine EU regions.
IFOAM EU videoclip on CAP
IFOAM EU Group has produced a videoclip on the reform of the CAP. The five-minute movie features organic stakeholders from various countries speaking about the pressing problems of mainstream agriculture, the solutions that organic farming has to offer and the demands of the IFOAM EU Group with regard to the CAP reform. The production of this movie has been made possible by the financial support of the European Community, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The movie is available online and has been distributed widely. Feel free to use it for your own work on organic food and farming or on the CAP.

Stakeholders exchange views on the current developments in the CAP reform
The Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development” hosted a conference on “Shaping the future of the Common Agriculture Policy” in the European Parliament on 20th June 2012. At the conference, Mr Capoulas Santos MEP defended his reports on the CAP reform stating that he sought to address the challenges facing EU agriculture while at the same time ensuring that there was enough flexibility for Member States and a more simplified policy for farmers. He added that his report was formulated in such a way that would ensure that the European Parliament had significant bargaining power during the trilogue negotiations between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The conference, which addressed the single CMO and the horizontal regulation, also saw positive and negative reactions from the main farming organisations, industry bodies and the Commission. Elsewhere, Birdlife launched a declaration calling for more funding to be allocated for targeted measures under the next programming period for rural development as part of the reform of the CAP. The declaration, launched at their conference on “A Strong Rural Development Policy - The key to unlocking the CAP’s green potential” on 07th June, calls for measures such as agri-environment to be clearly prioritised in order to promote sustainable land management, farming viability and economic development.
Council welcomes EIP on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability

At its meeting on 18th June in Luxembourg, the Agriculture Council discussed the Commission’s Communication on the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) ‘Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability’ published in February 2012. This EIP is aimed at fostering a competitive and sustainable agriculture and forestry sector and should bridge the gap between farming practice and science through smart networking. Two headline targets have been identified for the EIP: it should reverse the recent trend of diminishing productivity gains by 2060, and it should ensure soil functionality by 2020. The conclusions of the Council emphasised the fact that the EIP will rely mainly on already established mechanisms, and will avoid creating new structures. In particular, the EIP will make use of the CAP Rural Development Policy and the EU Research and Innovation Framework. The Council also underlined that innovation has different meanings in different Member States, and that innovation may be technological, non-technological or social, and may be based on new or traditional practices. Finally, the Council invited the Commission to prepare a strategic implementation plan for the EIP. IFOAM EU looks forward to this implementation plan, but questions how the Commission will reconcile productivity and sustainability targets. In its communication, the Commission avoided making clear choices.

First results of questionnaire on agro-ecological innovation

The project “Agro-Ecological Innovation”, in which IFOAM EU is lead partner and involves TP Organics and ARC 2020, kicked off with a questionnaire in six languages to collect experiences and obstacles to the exchange of agro-ecological knowledge. The questionnaire closed on 05th June with a total of ninety responses from various stakeholders. When asked about the advantages of practitioner-led innovation and knowledge exchange, the majority of respondents mentioned the fact that it is rooted in daily practice and that colleagues can help each other because they understand each other’s problems. The danger is, however, that knowledge produced or innovation is not shared outside the small group of participants. Acknowledging that research conducted at classic research institutes has several disadvantages because research institutes do not understand the problems practitioners are facing or use too theoretical language, many respondents acknowledged the need to scientifically underpin the findings of farmers. One of the respondents formulated this as the need ‘for a continuous dialogue between practitioners and researchers to assure that practice-relevant issues are addressed and in the meantime a certain scientific standard is achieved’. According to respondents, scientifically-backed knowledge will be trusted more easily by public authorities and by the public in general. Finally, many respondents denounced the lack of funding for scientific institutes and practitioners wishing to collaborate in a participatory way.

Review of Roundtable Horizon 2020

On 07th June the Horizon 2020 NGO Alliance, of which IFOAM EU is an active member, invited members of the European Parliament, representatives from the European Commission, research institutes and other NGOs to discuss their demands for a strong involvement
of civil society in Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the EU’s flagship initiative Innovation Union. In December 2011 the Commission presented the first legal proposals for Horizon 2020, which is scheduled to start in 2014.

Several topics were brought forward at the **Roundtable**: a more inclusive approach towards innovation, the need to shift the focus from resource efficiency to resource conservation, and public access to knowledge produced by publicly-funded research. The conference offered the opportunity to have a democratic debate between civil society and policy-makers as part of the Horizon 2020 consultation process.

The Director of the IFOAM EU Group, Marco Schlüter, moderated the Roundtable. Urs Niggli, director of FiBL and representing IFOAM EU, asked the members of the European Parliament present how Horizon 2020 should pursue its commitment to ‘an absolute decoupling of economic growth from resource use’ and whether it would be better for Horizon 2020 to focus on resource conservation instead of resource efficiency.

The topics raised by the NGO Alliance were well-received by the members of the European Parliament and they encouraged the NGO Alliance to continue proposing amendments. Members of the European Parliament can table amendments until 26th June. IFOAM EU and the NGO Alliance will closely monitor what amendments are tabled and will propose additional amendments if necessary.

Read the **Introductory speech** by Dr. Claudia Neubauer, Fondation Sciences Citoyennes.

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**Organic Fraud: first verdicts handed out in Italy**

The trial related to the “Puss in boots” fraud started with its first hearing on 22nd May in Verona, Italy. The case came to light last December, after two years of scrutiny by the financial police in cooperation with authorised control bodies.

Sunny Land Co. and other smaller companies conspired in setting up a complex circle for the intentional illegal trafficking of foods with counterfeit organic certification papers. The investigation, which began to surface in the summer of 2010, focused on nearly 17,000 tons of barley, corn and soy meal for feed, sunflower, spelt, 2 lots of wheat and apples for sauce that were marketed through businesses linked to 5 persons and sold for nearly €5 million.

In effect, the accused are being charged with several counts of issuing invoices and other documents for non-existent transactions.

Seven people, businessmen and officials, were charged of fraud by the prosecutor of Verona. A total of 9 years and 4 months’ imprisonment and 2 years and 3 months’ probation were handed down by the judges so far. More trials will be held shortly.

*(based on text by Roberto Pinton AssoBio/FederBio)*
IFOAM EU Group office is looking for a Communication Assistant

The IFOAM EU Group is looking for a Communication Assistant for IFOAM EU’s communication department. The tasks include maintenance of the website, production and promotion of newsletter and other publications, setting up a photo archive and contact database, as well as feeding into social media channels and monitoring of media outreach.

Deadline for applications is 01st July. The complete job description, person specification and the conditions of employment can be found on the website of IFOAM EU.

NEW POLICY TRAINEE:
CAROLINA CARDOSO (BE/BR)

My master’s degree in bioengineering at the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL, Belgium) enabled me to broaden my knowledge in agriculture, environment and life sciences. After graduating, I took part in several research projects. Experience in Belgium and South America has raised my interest in several issues (e.g. territorial dynamics, organisation of work at farm level, heritage, exchange between stakeholders, pesticides and pollutants management). Joining IFOAM EU as a policy trainee will be an opportunity to continue working on sustainability, gain experience in the functioning of a federation of associations, and to be aware of policy and legislation regarding organic farming in Europe.

NEW REGULATION TRAINEE:
DIMITRIOS PETALIOS (GR)

Fascinated by agricultural sciences I graduated as Agricultural Economist from the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA), Greece, and also completed an MSc in Integrated Rural Developments and Management of Rural Space (AUA). Throughout my studies and previous work positions I developed a keen interest on the implementation of the CAP and Rural Development Policies and the assessment of their impacts on the socio-economic structure of European rural areas. My interest in organic agriculture stems from my bachelor thesis research on the implementation of the Organic Regulation EEC No 2091/92. Since then, I have always tried to be actively involved in and keep track of the development of the organic sector. At the beginning of May I started my traineeship in the Regulation area of the IFOAM EU Group. I see this traineeship as a stepping stone to my future career, gaining professional experience and putting my competences to good use.
Support IFOAM EU Group!
Next to membership fees, sponsoring is the only other financial input that can guarantee the carrying out of independent advocacy work and a proper presentation of the organic movement in Brussels.

To gain a wide number of sponsors, the IFOAM EU Group offers a variety of sponsorship options – there is at least one that will fit your needs!

The IFOAM EU Group will be pleased to jointly develop with you the best sponsoring option with you. An excellent way of gaining recognition on a European level for 2012 is supporting the IFOAM EU-FiBL-AOEL Processors’ Conference in November 2012. Get in contact with us for the fine-tuning of your sponsor ideas:

LenaWietheger@ifoam-eu.org
Tel: +32 2 808 79 91

Key Sponsor Presentation
IFOAM EU key sponsors 2012: ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD

ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD show their support for the work of IFOAM EU by a financial cooperation with IFOAM EU throughout the year 2012. Their money will be used to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

3. SPONSORSHIP

IFOAM EU Sponsorship in Action!

Sponsorship awards at the 6th European Organic Congress

5th European Organic Congress

Processing Conference, 2011

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PRESENTATION OF SIPAL PARTNERS

Sipal Partners, the specialist in Organic concentrates, offers a unique range based on cereal syrups (wheat, tapioca, rice, corn, barley malt, spelt, kamut), fruit juice concentrates (dates, figs, prunes), wheat starch and wheat gluten.

The concentrates provide numerous sweetening and technical functionalities (taste, colour, viscosity, coating, crispness, ...) for all sectors of the agri-food industry: biscuits, confectionery, breakfast foods, cereal bars, drinks, yoghurts, fruit preparations, ice creams, baby food, sauces, etc.

Created in 2002, Sipal Partners (Belgium) is the marketing unit for two partners producing exclusively organic products wanting to share their complementary know-how: Meurens Natural s.a. in Belgium (Sipal® range) and Sedamyl S.p.a in Italy (Seda range).

Sipal Partners is well-known in Europe and worldwide as a specialist thanks to:

- the know-how in cereal hydrolysis as a result of the variety of raw materials processed (wheat, rice, barley malt, corn, oat, spelt, etc.);
- the use of flours (wholegrain cereals) as raw materials. In fact, Sipal Partners is not limited to the use of starch as in the conventional sector;
- using a clean and natural production process (non-refining), a maximum of the benefits of the raw materials are preserved (minerals, taste, colour, ...);
- the expertise acquired in the subject over more than 20 years.

Meurens Natural is a pioneer, that has already been complying with organic specifications since the end of the 1980s, long before European legislation came into force in 1993;

- an ultra-modern production tool fully dedicated to organic raw materials and production processes guaranteeing complete traceability from fields to the concentrates.

The Sipal range production satisfies ISO 22000 & ISO 9001 requirements.

Sipal Partners products have the following certifications: EU, NOP, Kosher, GMO-free and gluten-free.
4. EVENTS

4.1. Review of events

Sustainable Foods Summit
The sixth edition of the Sustainable Foods Summit, organised by Organic Monitor, took place in Amsterdam from 07th to 08th June. The IFOAM EU Group was a supporter of the event. The topic of this year’s summit was ‘New horizons for eco-labels and sustainability’. The president of Organic Monitor Amarijt Sahota presented the definition of eco-labelled foods according to Organic Monitor as ‘a labelling scheme for food products that are made with some positive environmental or social benefits’, with the organic and fair-trade certification being the major logos. As outlined by several of the presenters, the story behind a product is increasingly becoming important to consumers: traceability rather than certification. Mobile technology applications were presented as one possibility of conveying the story of a product.

4.2. Preview of events

Call for action: Good Food March for real CAP reform
Preparations for the civil society “Good Food March” to Brussels are in full swing with farmers, citizens and young people across Europe planning to march this summer to demand that decision-makers deliver a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) capable of responding to the needs of farmers, rural communities and society as a whole. Marchers travelling across Europe will meet in Brussels on 19th September, culminating in an open-air Good Food Brunch and a civil society conference on the CAP. IFOAM EU Group is amongst the organisations launching the action.

Pictures of the event are available on the website of the Sustainable Foods Summit.
GMO freeRegions Conference 2012 – 4th & 5th of September in Brussels
The 7th GMO free regions conference will be held on 4th and 5th of September in Brussels. Central topics of the conference this year will be the upcoming seed legislation and the right to a national ban of GMO cultivation, the import of GM-soy in connection with the approaching European CAP reform, and the deficient risk assessment of GMOs by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Find the preliminary programme, as well as the details on registration and accommodation here.

Conference on Organic Food Processing
The IFOAM EU Group, in collaboration with AoeL and FiBL Germany, is organising its 2nd Organic Food Processing Conference on 26th and 27th November 2012 in Oberursel-Frankfurt, Germany. The conference aims to discuss the current status and further developments of organic processing rules and practices, and extend this debate with topics of current concern, such as organic credibility and integrity.

The conference will offer the possibility to discuss below issues in the form of three workshops:

• Sustainability: Ecological and social performance of the organic food chain
• Quality: Careful processing and quality of processed organic foods
• Integrity: Credibility of the organic sector – certification, control requirements, traceability, imports

Organic businesses but also experts, including representatives from DG Agriculture and Rural Development, certifiers, scientists and NGOs are invited to participate in the debate.

The conference offers the possibility of presenting supporters to a European audience of various backgrounds in agriculture and environment. If you are interested in supporting this conference, get in contact with communication@ifoam-eu.org.
4.2. Preview of events

Organic Days in Cyprus

The consequences of climate change and building resilience to water scarcity are two of the major challenges for agriculture in Mediterranean regions. The conference “Future farming in times of climate change and water scarcity”, to take place in Cyprus on 26th September, will reflect these challenges and discuss possible solutions within the EU policy frameworks.

This high-level expert conference, organised by the IFOAM EU Group, the Cyprus EU Presidency and Pasybio (representing the Organic sector in Cyprus), will feed into current EU and Member States’ policy debates on the CAP post-2013, rural development programmes, the implementation of the water framework directive and the climate strategy. Speakers will include policymakers and stakeholders from the European Commission, European Parliament, Cypriot government, economy, science and the organic food sector.

The conference takes place in the framework of the “Organic Days in Cyprus from the 24th to the 26th of September, 2012”. For detailed information on the event, visit the event’s website.
### Calendar of events

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<td>20-24 August</td>
<td><strong>12th Congress of the European Society for Agronomy</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Helsinki, Finland</strong></td>
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<td>August - 19 September</td>
<td><strong>Good Food March</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Across Europe</strong></td>
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<td>4-5 September</td>
<td><strong>7th GMO free Europe Conference</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Brussels, Belgium</strong></td>
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<td>8-11 September</td>
<td><strong>sana: 24th International exhibition of organic and natural products</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Bologna, Italy</strong></td>
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<td>12-14 September</td>
<td><strong>2nd IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Hamburg, Germany</strong></td>
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<td>24-26 September</td>
<td><strong>Organic Days in Cyprus</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Larnaca, Cyprus</strong></td>
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<td>25 September</td>
<td><strong>The European Food Security Conference: Better Farming For A Sustainable European Food Supply</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Brussels, Belgium</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>26-27 November</td>
<td><strong>IFOAM EU Processing Conference</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Brussels, Belgium</strong></td>
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The IFOAM EU Group acknowledges the financial support of the European Community, DG Environment throughout the year 2012. The sole responsibility lies with the IFOAM EU Group, and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided by IFOAM EU Group.

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope.

Information IFOAM EU Group: http://www.ifoam-eu.org

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Please send any comments or contributions to the newsletter to communication@ifoam-eu.org. For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.

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The IFOAM EU regulation dossier is handed over to Luxembourg Ministers Romain Schneider (Agriculture) (centre left) and Marco Schank (Environment) (second from left) by IFOAM EU Vice-President Alexander Gerber (far left), Board member Raymond Aendekerk (far right), and Policy Manager Antje Kölling (second from right).